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Wild Dogs

I awoke to the annoying red alarm clock. It was ringing as fast as me wagging my tail! I slowly crept off of my purple dog bed. I put my paws on the silver button on the top. Finally, it shut off. My human awoke. She patted me on the head. Then walked into the bathroom and shut the door.

Sometimes in the morning, when I wasn't sleeping or begging for food an treats, I would trot to the office. Open the very bottom drawer of the black metal cabinet. I'd shuffle around the papers and folders until I came to the one with my name on it. Vet papers, vet bills, receipts for my toys, nutrition information on my food, aha! Here it is, my adoption papers.

Show Name/Long Name: Sunny Rays
Shortened Name: Sun
DOB: August 25, 2012
Gender: Female
Adopted From: Pretty Mutt Pups
Signature: Melina Reyes

I loved looking at my adoption papers. It made me feel like I was special. That I had a purpose in life. If I wasn't adopted by Melina, I would be utheunized! I loved my life though. I wake up, get a 30 minute walk, and then get my gourmet wet food. Then she would leave for work. I got a whole day to play and nap. Then when she got home at 3 I would go to the dog park for 2 hours. I got to see my friends! Then we got home, she played with me, and I got more wet food. We watched tv for an hour. And finally went to bed. She would get up at 6, and the whole system started again. We lived on a 20 acre farm. Her brother owned the land and barn and houses. He was a vet. But used the land to hunt. So I got a lot of room to play!

"Sun! Time for your walk!"

I bounded quickly to the front door. She clipped my purple and

black plaid leash to my matching collar. We jogged down to the barn. She tied me to the metal ring connected to the door.

"Alright Sun. Be a good girl. Stay here and no barking!" Melina cooed. I sat in the shade, A loud banging noise awoke me from my quick nap.

Down the trail in the woods, it was dark so it was hard to see. But I could see the two figures rummaging through the ground.

Chapter 2

One black and dark grey female wolf. She looked like she was digging up a bone? And the grey male next to her was looking around.

"Phew. He doesn't see me. He looks mean." I said. I slowly closed my eyes.

"Sun.... Wake up girl!" Melina shook me awake. "you've been sleeping for 10 minutes! We've got 15 minutes left for a walk." She yanked on my collar. I yelped quietly.

We started jogging towards the trail. Where the wolves once were. I yapped, trying to turn around. The wolves marked their territory very well. I couldn't interfere with that. They'd rip me to shreds!

"Come on silly girl! Let's gooooo!" Melina cooed.

"I'm not going anywhere!" I thought.

Just tug, up, left, right, down. Ha! I'm free! Quick! Run to the house! I sprinted all the way to the back door. I patiently sat on the porch while Melina caught up.

"Oh bad girl Sun! I could've lost you!" She checked her watch. "well, I still have to eat breakfast. I'll just eat at the office."

She took me inside and put me in her room. Then she closed the white door. I spun in a circle and laid down on my purple bed. Waiting for the signal. Garage door, car, garage door. She's gone.

I pawed at the door handle. My heavy paws pushed it down. I used my head to get the door open. Yes, I'm free! I head down the stairs and to to the pantry door. I open that to. I get at my dry dog food, taking a few bites as my snack. (I can't open my wet food) Then I look out the porch window. And stare into the forest as I usually do. I get caught in day dreams. Until a loud snarl awakes me from my

fantasy.

"Ahhhh!" The two wolves! They're outside my door staring at me! Lock the doggy door! Take the food! Help! Help help help help!

"Cool your jets dog," the female growls "we just want to talk."

"Help! Help help help!!!"

"Let me talk to her Ivy. Listen up pup, you better talk or were breaking in there!"

"Fang! We're not breaking in!"

I looked puzzled. I had to do whatever I can to stop them from eating me. Distractions? "Ok, so what is this. Good cop, bad cop?"

Ivy smiled sweetly. "It's a little like that. I'm the nice caring one. Fang is the wild one. He's part wolf part husky. And was used for dog fighting. Before someone rescued him and he ran away. I'm pure Timber Wolf!" She happily howled to the sun.

"Well..... If you want any kibble, you can have it. I prefer wet food."

"Oh no thanks. We only eat animal."

"I'm pretty sure there's animal in the kibble. You never can trust the FDA to check to well in dog food."

"Well anyways, back to the subject. We wanted to..." A bark from Fang cut her off. He glared at her. "I wanted to know if you want to join our pack! Were all nice. Except Fang."

I thought of my choices. I could lock myself in a room. Nah, they'd come back. I could go with them. But then I'd miss Melina. I figured out the best option.

"I will go, but only from 8 to 2:30. When my human is gone. Then I have to come back"

Fang turned away. "Whatever." He murmured.

"Great! But first we have to know a little bit about you. Age, name, and breed."

"Ok. 2 years old, my full name is Sunny Rays but Sun for short. I'm a mix of Lab, Golden Retriever, Border Collie, and husky. But I got golden fur."

"Your very pretty. Just, throwing out a compliment." She smiled and licked her sore paw.

"Your beautiful!" And she was. Her grey and black hairs mixed with her cream hairs on the top of her body. Cream hairs lined her legs and belly. Her ears were tipped black. Fang was a stunning mix. His silver, grey, and black hair mix was amazing. His belly and legs were cream hairs mixed with black hairs.

"So," Ivy said "do you have anytime to come now? To our base."

I checked the clock.

"It's 2. My human will be home soon. Tomorrow. Am I allowed to bring toys and treats?"

"Toys and treats? Ummmm..... Like what?"

"Tennis balls, frisbee, stuffed squeaky toys! And dog biscuits!"

"Woah. Dog biscuits, sure. For the walk."

"Ok. You'd better go. I need to get back into the room."

"Ummmm.... Ok? Come on Fang."

"Whatever. See you later San." He snarled then chuckled.

"It's Sun! And yes see you later Fung!"

"It's Fang you dumb dog!"

I made my way back into the bedroom. And shut the door behind me. I laid down and slept on my purple dog bed. Waiting, for tomorrow to come.

Chapter 3

"Be a good girl Sun! I'll be back at 8 because I have a meeting." Melina said sadly as she closed the garage door. She let Sun roam free around the house today.

"Yes! My first day with the wolves and I have extra time to hang out! I need to pack!" Sun hollered to herself.

Sun grabbed a small paper bag. Then She put 4 bites of kibble and 4 dog biscuits in it. She barked out the doggy door, and a few minutes later, Ivy and Fang appeared.

"Hey Sun! Are you ready!"

"Totally!" She nosed her paper bag. "And I have to be back by 7. My human is staying late for a meeting."

"What is this 'meeting' you speak of? Sorry, I don't know much human stuff." She stared at the fence before continuing. "Oh and sorry we were late getting to the door. We were trying to get a sheep." Ivy licked her lips and laughed.

"Those are Melina brother's sheep. You shouldn't eat them!" I yelped when Fang grabbed my scruff.

"Fang!" Ivy growled and bit his muzzle. "But seriously Sun. If your going to come with us, you have to not care what you eat. Let's say.... Your food was taken away and you were thrown in the wild. What animal would you eat to survive?"

"I would eat plants! And berries."

"Useless." Fang muttered with hate.

"Some berries and plants are poisonous. So you would have to eat meat. Especially since meat is the only protein out here. Enough talking. Let's run there!"

She panted heavily as she tried keeping up. But with them being wolves, they ran all day!

"Keep up Sun!" Ivy barked as loud as she could. Sun was probably 60 feet behind them!

"I'm trying!" Sun stopped to pant. "Let's take a break!" She set down her bag and had a few bites of kibble.

"Hurry up pup! We can't stop!" Fang glared at her before running on.

"Delicious!" Sun yapped after eating a few bites of kibble. "I'm coming!"

She tried to keep up with them but slowly lagged behind. She stopped every few minutes to take a super quick break. But then started running when Ivy turned around. After 30 minutes of running, they made it to the Southern border of the wolf territory.

Ivy turned around to the panting Sun. "Wait here with Fang. I will get Rose to take her to Alpha."

Sun gulped. "Alpha?" She thought. "What if he's as mean as Fang!?"

Rose arrived with Ivy.

"This, is the dog you get? We wanted full Husky!" Rose snapped at Ivy.

"She's the closest dog. And she's part Husky!"

"But she's golden! That's a dead giveaway in wolf world." Rose sighed. "Well, guess we better see what Alpha will do with her. Come on pup."

Sun followed hesitantly. They arrived at a hole in the hillside. Rose stuck out her paw on Sun's chest. Two yellow eyes gleamed brightly. What did Sun get herself into!?

Chapter 4

Rose walked down the hole to Alpha's den. And that just showed how big it was. The hole was about 5 feet tall and 5 feet wide. But Alpha couldn't be that big? Could he?

Rose suddenly clambered up the tunnel. "Alpha will be up soon."

"Uh, I'm, uhh, ok." Sun stammered. Alpha wouldn't like her. She just knew it!

"Ah, you are the dog Ivy and Fang got hm? I am Alpha Cherokee."

Cherokee was big! He was black and dark grey hairs were all over his body. Cream and grey hairs were on his face. He had big white fangs.

"Uh. Uh yea. I guess."

"Well. I wanted them to get a husky. But you will have to do. But golden fur gives a wolf away. So what is your name?" He smirked. Sun felt scared. Maybe she didn't make the right choice?

"I'm Sun. I'm Labrador, Golden Retriever, Border Collie, and a Husky mix. But I got golden fur." She puffed out her chest. She wanted him to think that she was tough and would fight a wolf.

"Go with Rose. She will evaluate you. Then you be taken to a trainer to train you for those skills or tasks." With that, Cherokee trotted off to patrol his territory.

"Come on Sun!" Rose yipped. She seemed nice, and playful.

"So what is this evaluation?"

"You are tested to see if you are a good hunter, fighter, patroller, which then you have to be good in sneaking around. But you could also be a good strong puller. Or a healer. That would mean you know which plants and herbs can be made into medicine."

"Ok. "Sun didn't think she would be good at any of these things.

Rose pulled a rope and harness out of a pine tree. "We took this from humans. Can you put this on yourself?" Rose nosed the harness. Sun put her paws in the green harness. She pulled up one side and Rose pulled up the other. Rose clipped it together on her back. Then Rose clipped a black leash onto the silver hoops on the back of the harness.

"Ok. Now I'm going to put the end under a big boulder. Pull it as much as you can."

"Ok. I'll try."

Sun pulled it about 5 feet. Before the end of the leash flung out from under the boulder.

Rose laughed. "This time, I will hold it. And pull. You try to pull me."

Sun pulled her about 10 feet. But then she collapsed on the dirt.

"Maybe pulling isn't your talent. Let's try patroller! Go into the bushes. Then walk to the end of the bushes and make sure I don't see you! Stay on your belly and crawl."

Sun did what Rose told her. She actually made it to the end!

"No. You were able to be quiet and stay down. But your golden fur completely gives it away. Hunting next! I'm a rabbit. I'm going to run as fast as I can and you have to run in front of me. If you get in front of me you will stop."

Rose pounded forward. She kept running. Sun ran as fast as she could. But she couldn't keep 20 feet between them. There was no way she was going to get in front of Rose.

"Rose. I can't get in front of you!"

"I kind of guessed that..... Let's try fighting. I'm not going to actually fight you. But you have to claw me and lightly bite me. Do you know how to kill a wolf?"

"Uh no. I've never given it a thought."

"Well it's the neck. So bite my neck really lightly when you "killed" me."

Sun lightly bit her. But it just felt weird. Like she wasn't supposed to do it. She stopped.

"What's wrong?" Rose yapped.

"I can't do it! It's feels like I'm killing someone!" Sun snapped.

"Well..... Try healing. If you fail at this, then you will have to go home. Forever. There are twenty different plants here. Choose the one that has a creamy substance in it.

Sun remembered watching a healing show with Melina once. It showed you natural herbs to heal someone that you would find in a pine forest.

She sniffed the plants. Then finally she saw the thick leafed plant. She bit a piece off, and was happy to see the white lotion like substance dripping out.

"Found it Rose!" Sun said muffled. She had a leaf in her mouth.

"Wow! Good job! How'd you know?"

"I watched a healing in the forest show with Melina, my human. I remember all of it!"

"Well, I guess that's your talent! Healing! I hope you don't mind getting blood in your fur."

"What!" Sun looked shocked and worried.

"I'm joking! But anyways, your trainer will be Feather. He's the healer. Oh and you may meet Cloak. She's the other healer. But she's not here very often. Cloak is the best hunter in the pack so she hunts a lot. Instead of healing. But not many wolves get hurt because were the strongest pack around. So stay with us. You may run into another pack. And your not a good fighter. As for me, I'm a

fighter! I've gotten into more scuffles that there are wolves in this pack doubled!" Rose proudly puffed out her chest and howled to the sun.

"It's almost time for me to go. It's about 5:45."

"I don't keep track of time."

"Well, I'd like to know more about you."

"I was alpha of a pack before I came here. I didn't like being alpha. It was to much work. I also have a mate. But, he, um, disappeared. He was a strong fighter along with me. He had icy blue eyes and all black fur. His name was Burn." Sun thought she saw a tear slide down her face, before she turned away.

"Let's go eat. You will eat, then Ivy will take you back home. She will sleep under your porch and take you here again tomorrow. I must go hunt now. Go find Ivy." With that, Rose ran off.

Chapter 5

Sun ran the whole way with Ivy. She never stopped. But Ivy still pulled ahead of her. Sun walked into the house, and Ivy dug herself a hole under the porch. Sun stuffed her paper bag in her dog bed lining. Then she laid down and tried to go to sleep. But it was so hard! She was too excited to tell her friends Diamond and Lightning about her and the wolves! Maybe they could join?

Melina got home. She happily hugged Sun.

"Uck! Sun your all dirty! Did you dig in my plants? Let's get you clean before you go to the dog park!" She bathed Sun in her 2 person jet bath tub. Then she blew dry her golden fur. And brushed her.

"Now for the finishing touch, dog safe fur gloss!" Melina pumped a shiny lotion into her hands . She rubbed it all over. Sun then got brushed with a purple soft bristled brush.

Sun got her sparkly pink leash clipped to her sparkly black collar. Melina walked down the curb with Sun at her heels. Sun excitedly pawed at the black gate.

"You ready to see your friends?" Melina asked. She flicked up the lock on the gate and Sun ran in. She smelt Diamond and Lightning at the top of the hill.

She jogged up the hill and saw them sitting on the bench. Their favorite spot. You could see the whole dog park up there!

"Sun! Hop on over." Diamond said. Diamond was a grey and brown colored Border Collie, Aussie mix. She had maroon spots on her body. Diamond was 2 years and 4 months old.

Lightning was a Corgi, Beagle, and something else mix. He may have had some German Shepherd in his family line.

Sun followed Diamond's gaze to 14 wiggly, excited puppies jumping down the hill with Diamond's owner Lily and Lightning's owner, Savannah. Melina was walking with them as well.

"Diamond how are the puppies? They are sooo cute!" Sun yipped.

"They're old enough to not follow me. They have become really independent and they're 4 months old."

Lightning looked confused. "What are their names again?"

"You really don't remember?" Diamond sighed. "Ruby, Sapphire, Emerald, Gem, Jewel, Jade, Silver, Gold, Copper, Turquoise, Topaz, Amethyst, Pearl and Aquamarine. All girls. Except for Copper, the boy."

"How does Copper feel being the only boy puppy!?" Lightning laughed. He was usually one to joke.

"Why don't you ask him?" Diamond growled. She didn't like people joking about her puppies.

Sun just couldn't wait to tell them. She had to now! "Guess what happened to me today?"

Lightning and Diamond took turns asking.

"You got attacked by a sheep?"

"You saw a deer?"

"Coyote?"

"Wolf!?"

"You got it right Diamond! I from 8-2, live, fight, eat, and help in a wolf pack!"

Their eyes got huge.

"That's soooo cool!" Lightning barked.

"That's soooooo dangerous!" Diamond yelped. "Sun, they will try to

kill you!"

"No they won't. They are all nice. Except Fang. But he doesn't go near me. Alpha Cherokee is.... Mysterious. I talked to him only once. But I'd like for you to join me!"

"I would love to!" Lightning yapped. "But I'm a bit to small."

"Don't worry Lightning. Your not to small. I'll ask the wolves tomorrow and then you can probably join! Diamond, do you want to?"

"I've got pups. Otherwise I would." Diamond blankly replied. She didn't seem to happy about the idea.

"Let's play ball." Sun barked, trying to change the subject.

"I guess it would teach the pups something." Diamond was a bit more happier now.

They got their owners. Melina, Lilly, and Savannah threw them balls. Lightning was fast to get his. Sun liked to run around and make Melina chase her. Diamond taught the pups to drop when the humans want them to and retrieve the ball quickly. They played until 10. Luckily tomorrow was Friday! They all slumped home, tired from playing. When Sun got home, she quickly ate her food and then went to bed. She couldn't be tired for another day with the wolves.

Chapter 6

Melina finally left. Sun took a few bites of kibble. She nosed open the door, which was left unlocked. She barked out the door. Ivy clambered out of her makeshift den.

"Ready to go Sun? I hardly slept at all! Way to cramped." Ivy said.

"I got to bed way to late." Sun replied.

"Your lucky your a healer. I'm a fighter and hunter. Let's go. Alpha Cherokee wanted to talk to you."

"Really? Is he evil to? Like Fang?" Sun nervously asked.

"No. He's just, been through a lot. He's different."

"I'm going to ask him about my friend Lightning joining!"

"Woah, Sun. We let you join because Alpha Cherokee wanted to test a house pet. I'm not sure he'd want another." Then Ivy started running. Sun tried to get to the side of her but Ivy was to fast. Ivy pulled ahead of her. They finally reached base. Sun was panting and colassped over. Alpha ran to her and yanked Sun up by her scruff.

"Come with me." He ordered. Sun quietly whimpered.

As they walked, Sun tried to calm herself. She was able to stop shaking, and even straightened herself up. But her mind was racing with thoughts.

"So, Sun. Your on a path to becoming a healer. Do you know the responsibility in that?"

"Yes sir I very much do. I look forward to it." Sun stuck out her chest. She wanted to look strong.

"Very well. Tonight you will not go home to your human. You will stay here the night for a welcoming ceremony."

"But, Alpha Cherokee, I must go back to my human. She will dearly miss me."

"Enough! You will head out early tomorrow morning."

Sun sighed. There was no way he was changing his mind. "Well, I would also like to know. If my friend Lightning could join. He's a Corgi, Beagle, German Shepherd, and something else mix. He's small, but amazingly fast."

"Bring him in 3 sun rises and 2 moon rises. Rose will evaluate him. And then I shall decide. Now leave." Alpha barked.

Sun was happy with his answer. But now she was confused. Where should she go? A grey and cream colored male wolf was watching her.

"Sun?"

"Who... Who are you?"

"I am Feather. The healer and your trainer. Rose told me to find you. Your training starts now. Follow me to the healing den."

Sun happily trotted through the entrance. The healing den was huge! It had one wall lined with small rocks. One wall had a pile of different animal pelts. Next to the rocks was hollow pieces of wood with sticky grass, seeds, plants, creams, grasses leaves woods, and many more healing supplies. Sun doubted she'd know about many of these things.

"I will have to show you what all these supplies in the hollow sticks. It took me a while to figure out this stuff too."

Sun blushed and turned around. She pretended to be greatly interested in rabbit pelts.

"Your first patients will be Falcon, Hawk, and Eagle. Male puppies. They have a few scratches from playing to rough. You will need to slab some cream on a feather and wrap it on their cuts with a thin strip of rabbit pelts."

"I think I can handle that." Sun confidently stated. Puppies didn't sound that hard.

"They might be a bit squirmy. The trick is to bribe them to stay still. Like say after this they can play or something. They'll be here in a little while."

After some time of waiting and cleaning up the den, the pups finally came.

"Sun, I'll get the supplies. You will put it on the pups while I watch and if you need help, just ask."

Their mother brought them in.

"Hello. My name is Sky. The mother of these 3 rambunctious pups."

"I'm Sun. The mix breed dog. I'm training to be a healer!"

"Everyone knows that! Your what most of the wolves talk about. Well, here you go." She nosed the puppies towards Sun. "Good luck!"

Feather came holding 3 strips of rabbit pelt, and two hollow sticks. One with aloe, stolen from humans, and the other with big crow feathers. "Ready when you are."

Sun grabbed Hawk by the scruff. He wiggled a lot but settled down when Sun told him to hold still. She put some aloe on her paw then grabbed a feather in her mouth and set it on the ground. She lathered the aloe on the feather and stuck it on his scratch wound on his front left leg. Then she held it in place for a minute. Finally she wrapped the rabbit pelt around it and put some sticky grass on the end to hold it down.

"That was great Sun! Your a fast learner. Now, do the same with Eagle and Falcon." Feather said.

Sun tried to put it on Eagle but he kept moving. Eventually Feather had to hold him in place. She finally got the feather wrapped on his back.

Falcon'a wound was deeper and on his flank. She wrapped the pelt around his leg and back, like a Girl Scout sash. Luckily Falcon decided to be calm. Sky came back and retrieved the pups.

"Good job Sun! That's all you will be doing for today. But I have some more patients that are a bit more complicated. You will watch me."

Feather had worked with a sick elder wolf, a puppy with a cold, and a wolf with many scratches from a raccoon. Sun thought they were done for the day, until they heard a howl from outside the den.

"Sun, hop into that hole in the wall. Sit in there." Feather sternly told her. Sun did as she was told.

Out of nowhere a pregnant cream colored wolf burst in. A male grey wolf came in after her.

"Leaf, what's wrong?" Feather asked.

"The pups are coming." Stone, the grey wolf, Leaf's mate said.

Then a black female wolf climbed down the tunnel.

"Everyone out. Stone, Feather. Out!" The black wolf said. She saw Sun sitting in the hole.

"You, dog, what are you doing in here! I oughta rip you to pieces but I've got something to deal with."

"Cloak, that's the dog Alpha brought here, Sun. She's a trainee healer." Feather quickly mentioned

"I don't care! Get out! Everyone one, except you Leaf. I'll take care of this." Cloak yelled. Everyone exited the den.

"That's Cloak? The famous healer and hunter?" Sun said.

Feather nodded. Stone was next to speak. "I hope she's alright. Leaf, my mate I mean."

After a long while Leaf came up the tunnel. With a black female,

and a grey male.

"What shall we name them Stone? I want to name the black one." Leaf tenderly said.

"I will name the grey one, Stem."

"And the black one shall be named Pebble."

With that, they licked each other, the pups, then padded away to their den. Cloak emerged a few moments later.

"Feather, please clean up the den. Alpha wants me to hunt for 7 sun shines and 6 moons. I'll be gone for a little. And dog, stay out of my way. I'm the healer here. Don't forget it!" And she ran away.

Chapter 7

Sun slept for a little in the trainee den. But there was no one else in there. All the pups were to young to be a trainee. She slept until 5. Sun wished she could go home. Melina would be so worried. But Alpha Cherokee had to keep her there for the welcoming ceremony.

Sun hadn't seen Rose for a while. She was probably hunting. Sun slowly snuck up to the main base. This wolf pack had many territories. Their main base, where Alpha lived, was called Soaring Forest. The other territories had similar names such as Soaring Mountains, Soaring Plain, or Soaring Hill depending on where their territories were.

Sun jogged to a corner of the main base. The main base was dark. The trees cast shadows around them. Outside of the base, Sun could see a hill. A hill with green grass and red flowers. The sun beat down on it.

She put her front right paw over the invisible line marking the territory. Then her left front paw. Then her back paws. She turned around and glanced back. Then she ran to the hill. Sun rolled around on her back and jumped around. She smelled the red flowers. They smelt like honey. The grass was so soft it was almost like her plush dog bed. She found herself missing home. Sun let her eyes flutter closed and day dreamed. But she smelt another wolf. Sun looked around. A female silver wolf stepped out growling, teeth bared.

"Your on my territory dog." She snapped.

"It hasn't been marked." Sun shot back.

"I was about to. My name is Snap of the Fox Feather pack. Thought I'd tell you that before you die!" Snap rushed forward and lunged for Sun.

Sun howled out a warning. She was close enough for someone to

hear her. She yelped when Snap pulled her down by her flank. Sun sucked up all her courage and fought back.

Sun was able to get free from her grip. She jumped around the hill. Snap was able to catch up to her and grabbed her leg and tore into it. Sun grabbed onto her shoulder. She held on best she could but she couldn't get much of a grip. Snap released her leg and tried to get Sun off her back by attempting to bite her face. Soon after Snap got Sun off another silver wolf emerged from behind a hill. He lunged onto Snap and chased her away.

"Th... Thanks. For saving me." Sun stammered.

"No problem." The wolf smiled, showing his pearly white fangs.

"Seriously though. Thanks. Without you I would've died."

"Yeah. I'm Moon. From Soaring Hill pack. And you are?"

"Sun. I'm a dog but Alpha Cherokee allowed me to stay with Soaring Forest pack."

"Cool. Want me to walk you back to the base? I know it's not far, but your pretty beat up. But Snap had some large gashes from your fangs."

"You know her?" Sun thought. Was he her mate?

"Yea. I've run into her before. Fox Feather pack is a pack of ruthless killing wolves. About a pack of 15. But the Soaring packs are one pack within different territories."

They reached the border. Sun and Moon stepped over the invisible scent line. Moon turned around but Sun stopped him.

"Will I ever see you again?"

"Yea. I'll be at the rendezvous. When all the Soaring packs meet. It's in 15 suns and 14 moons."

"Oh ok... Umm.. Bye!"

"See ya Sun." With a wink, he ran back to his pack.

Chapter 8

"Sun! Oh my gosh! Your so beat up! What happened!?" Feather exclaimed he led her to the healing den.

"I fought with Snap, a wolf from Fox Feather pack. I was rolling on a hill that wasn't marked and she attacked me. Then Moon from Soaring Hill saved me."

"Good thing he did or you could've died!"

Feather put aloe on all of her cuts. Then he rubbed it in with a rabbit pelt. A large wound on her flank had to be wrapped like the puppies had to be.

"There. Rest in the trainee den. Then Rose and I will come an hour before your ceremony to clean you and wash off the aloe. And then take off the wraps."

Sun slowly walked to the trainee den. Sky saw her. Covered in aloe.

"Sun! Are you ok!?" Sun could tell she was greatly concerned and worried.

"Just a fight with a wolf from Fox Feather pack." Sun smiled sheepishly.

"Those Fox Feathers are much trouble! I'm going to tell Alpha Cherokee about this!"

"Please don't!" Sun didn't want Alpha to think she was a whiner. But it was to late. Sky was already running to Alpha Cherokee's den.

"Better to just get to the den quickly before I cause anymore trouble." Sun thought to herself.

She climbed down into the tunnel and fell fast asleep. Sun was awakened at 8. Feather was washing off the aloe with water that was in hollow wood. Rose was briefing her on what to do.

"When we leave the den, all the wolves will be sitting in the front and to the side of the Alpha rock. You will walk through the middle that is lined with petals and leaves. Then you will sit at the end. Alpha will say a speech and then you will say I do. Then he will give you a special token of the pack." Rose explained. There was so much to learn!

"Ok. I think I've got it...." Sun wasn't sure if she wanted to go through this.

Rose licked her clean. Feather took off her wrap.

"Uh oh...."

"WHAT!? What!?"

"The cut was a bit worse than expected. It's very red in the area."

Sun looked at her flank. Feather was right! The skin was as red as a cherry!

"She can't go out like this!" Rose screamed. She was a perfectionist.

"Can't you just cover it up with my fur?"

"We will have to try." Rose licked Sun's fur over the red spot. By the time she was done you couldn't see it at all!

"It's time Sun!" Feather exclaimed.

"Oh yea, Feather and Cloak will be there. They will give you a speech and a token of training." Rose smiled then exited the den. Feather left after her.

Sun walked up the den. Alpha looked at her. Everyone turned to look at her. Moon was there to! In the very front on the right row! She smiled at him then looked forwards.

"Please quiet down for the arrival of Sunny Rays." Alpha looked down at her from Alpha rock.

"Sunny Rays is our new healer trainee. She will be staying with us

from 8 to 2:30 every day. Except second to last sun of the week and the last sun of the week. 5 suns. Her mentor is Ivy and Rose. Her healing mentors are Cloak and Feather. Sun, do you swear to agree your loyalty to the pack? Do you swear to not betray our pack? Do you swear to protect your pack even if it means risking your own life? Do you swear to follow the pack rules? Do not betray the pack, protect the pack, live with the pack."

Sun gulped before speaking. "I do."

"Then from here on out, your pack name will be Sunshine. And your shortened name will be kept as Sun. Here is your token of the pack."

Alpha gave her a vine with a sun flower tied to the end.

"Wolves, congratulation howl!"

All the wolves started howling. Moon's stuck out. He had a deep howl. His howl kept continuing as if he never ran out of breath. When the wolves stopped, Alpha Cherokee spoke again.

"Sunshine, please step forward to speak to your trainers."

Cloak glared at Sun before speaking.

"Sun, you will be trained by us to be a healer. Congratulations." Then she sat still.

"Sun, do you pledge to be loyal to our pack and train to be a healer?"

"I do."

"Then please accept this token of healer apprenticeship."

The token was a vine with a small hollow log at the end. Aloe covered the whole outside. Sticky grass lined the whole inside. Sunflower seeds were sprinkled on the outside. The wolves did another congratulations howl. Sun bowed her head and walked back to the trainee den. Ivy was in front of her. Rose was to the right of her. Feather to the left, and Cloak in the back.

Chapter 9

"Sun wake up. Let's move. It's 3 am. Cloak has to heal you fully before you go to your human."

Sun groggily got up. She was starving. She didn't eat anything for a day. She refused to eat animal. Ivy led her to the healing den. It was dark and hard to see. But she could smell Cloak.

"Bring her in Ivy."

Ivy pushed Sun in. Cloak told her to lay down while she got the supplies.

"Luckily your gash is only a large scratch now. Feather healed it up pretty well. We better fix it now though. I've had my experiences with humans. And they don't like scratches on their dogs."

"Really? You had an owner?"

"Just.... Forget it! Nevermind." Cloak huffed and turned around. "I'm going to put this cream on. It's a fast healer. We ran out of aloe. Well have to get more from humans. Then let's put this sticky grass on to bring it closer together. Have Ivy lick your fur over it. Hopefully your human won't notice. Your all set. See ya later Sun." Cloak ran up the tunnel and went hunting.

"Ivy! Where are you?" Sun called. Ivy emerged a few moments later. She came from the direction of the food pile.

"Sorry I was eating." She yawned. "You ready to go?"

"Um yea. It's dark."

"We'll walk. Stay by me. I'll be back on the start of the 5 suns."

"Monday." Sun yawned. "Let's head there. I'm super tired as well. And hungry."

"Then let's head there quickly." Ivy concluded.

They walked, and walked, and walked. At 9 am they reached the house. Sun walked up the steps and thanked Ivy. She ran into the woods, back to base. Sun scratched at the door. She whined and barked. Melina had to be home.

"Sun! Oh my! Sun! I missed you so much! Come inside! Your so dirty! Let's clean you!" Melina exclaimed.

Sun tried to stop her but she couldn't. Melina filled up her white, two person jet tub with warm water. Then she poured in a cup of dog bubble bath and turned on the jets. She lifted Sun in and started to bathe her. Melina's hands stopped on the sticky grass. She peeled it off and screamed when she saw her cut.

"Sun! What happened! I'm taking you to the vet ASAP!"

She lead Sun to the car. Then she put the keys in the ignition. And sped down the road at 60 mph. Luckily it was a country road! After 30 minutes, they arrived at the vet. Sun was still soaking wet. Melina rushed in and plopped Sun on a chair. She rushed up to the receptionist. Not caring if everyone in the room was staring at her.

"Miss, I must see Dr. Smith right away! My dog has a scratch!"

"Well there's a waiting line . Your number 12 on the list. You'll be waiting for a couple of hours."

"I can't wait! She must get to the doctor now!"

"Miss, sit down NOW! Or I'm calling security!"

Melina did as she was told. A few moments later Dr. Smith came out.

"Ah! Melina! How's Sun?"

"She's got a big wound! You have to see her now!"

"Well, I am on break. Bring her in Exam Room 2."

Melina carried Sun in. Sun laid down on the cold metal table. The vet turned on a lamp above the table. Then he turned off the room light and got out a magnifying glass. He poked around her side. Sun flinched when he touched the scratch. It was small but it stung.

"Ah hear we go! Let me get a small mirror." The vet scratched his grey beard and opened the cupboard. He took out a green stick with a mirror on the end. Like the one a dentist would use.

"Well, just a little scratch." He turned on the light and shut off the overhead light. "It is causing her some pain." He then grabbed a bottle of white lotion from a drawer. "Put this on her cut for a week. And keep her inside."

"Thanks Dr. Smith. I definitely will!"

Melina walked out carrying Sun. She ignored the glares and icy stares of the other patients.

"Sun, your staying inside for the next week!"

Sun whined and scratched at the car door. She licked the window and barked. She had to be with the wolves! When they got home, Melina slabbed the lotion on Sun's scratch. Then she dumped 1 cup of kibble and 2 small wet foods in her bowl. Sun gobbled it down in under 2 minutes.

"Want some more?" Melina did the same as before. And Sun ate that. The she dumped 2 cups of kibble in her bowl. Sun was full after that. Then she walked to the black leather couch and fell asleep.

When Sun woke up, Melina fed her her wet food. Then she left for work. Sun was happy she had Saturday and Sunday off. She pawed at the remote and turned on the tv. A trick she learned from watching Melina. She channel surfed through soap operas, hunting channels, kids shows, and movies. She stopped at the channel called Animal Planet. There was a marathon of Dogs 101 on. They were talking about the Great Dane, Bloodhound, Poodle, and Rhodesian Ridgeback. Sun happily watched when they talked about the Husky, Border Collie, Golden Retrievers, and Labrador Retrievers. She also

watched Wolf Hybrids, Australian Shepherds, Beagles, Welsh Corgis, Beagles, and German Shepherds. All the breeds she liked. Sun got off the couch and lapped up some room temperature water. Then she dragged her bed to the couch. And fell asleep. Dreaming she was a wolf fighting Snap.

Chapter 10

Sunday came quickly. Melina didn't have work on the weekends. She rubbed more cream onto Sun's wound which wasn't anything more but dead skin now. Sun happily yipped and pawed at the front door. They were going to the dog park. She could tell Lightning the good news. They walked down the curb, because they were in the country and there was no sidewalk. They started to jog for a few minutes. But they walked for the rest of the way. 13 minutes had passed. They made it to the dog park. Sun yapped at Melina and licked the black gate.

"Hold on. I'm coming."

She flipped the latch but kept Sun on her leash.

"Be calm. Your not even supposed to be outside with your wound."

Sun hated that Melina was making such a big deal over a little scratch. She wasn't a delicate little flower. She fought Snap too! Sun whined and looked around the park. No scent of Lightning or Diamond or the puppies was nearby. In fact, not many dogs were running around by the front, gate, or on the hill.

Sun whined and Melina unclipped her leash unwillingly. Sun dashed off, ignoring Melina's pleas to come back. She ran to the bench at the top of the hill. No one was there. But she could smell Lightning's scent. It led down to a long line of trees by the fence. She sniffed around some more but couldn't smell any Diamond scent. She must be at home with the puppies.

Sun walked down the hill to the line of trees. In the trees, a male Husky and a female Greyhound sat on a thick branch. Lightning was speaking to them. Older dogs were talking to each other amongst the stumps. Younger dogs ran around the side of the hill opposite from the gate.

Lightning dashed off towards the direction of the gate. Sun followed

him. Even a small dog was faster then her! Lightning looked back and saw that she was following him so he slowed down.

"Sun! I'm busy. Can't talk."

"Wait Lightning. I... Need an explanation." She panted.

"This Husky, came in out of nowhere yesterday. All dirty. Looked like a stray. The Greyhound, Lynn, took a liking to him right away. They became mates. The Husky forced everyone to see them as Alphas. And now they listen to him. He said to listen to him or die. And most dogs are smaller then him so they listen. He saw I was fast so I became the servant. I can't die. He at first wanted Diamond as a mate and wanted to kill her puppies. But she fought him. Then she got the puppies and herself out and hasn't came back. It's all really confusing. But I have to go. I don't have much time to get them dog biscuits." Lightning rambled.

"What's..."

"His name? He doesn't have one. He insists everyone call him Alpha."

Sun felt a new found strength inside of her. She had to make this dog park free again. Rage bubbled inside of her. This dog park was for dogs to roam free, away from owners and ownership. This Husky was 'owning' them. And that wasn't right.

Sun walked with determination up to the Husky. He was snarling at a Boxer who didn't show submission. The Boxer took a snap at his ear then ran off. When the Husky saw Sun he growled.

"Your new here dog. What's your name?"

"Sun. And I'm not any ordinary dog. I was born in a wolf pack. I'll fight you. I'm not afraid." Sun knew she was lying about being pack born. But she had to look tough.

"I'm a former sled dog."

"What's your name?"

"Call me Alpha."

"I will call you by your name. Your not an alpha. Your a normal dog."

"I'm alpha of this park! And if you must know my name, it's Shred. A shortened name for Shredder. Which is exactly what I'll do to you if you try to mess with me."

Sun knew she couldn't win if she fought him. She needed help. The fence was low enough for her to climb over if she stood on another dogs back. She thought of who would help. Lightning couldn't. Aha! The Boxer that refused to show submission.

"Hey you. What's your name? And do you hate the Husky like I do?"

"I'm Quince. And yea I hate that Husky."

"I know a way to stop this. Help me climb over the fence."

He allowed Sun to climb onto his back. She easily hopped over the black gate. The thick spikes at the top scraped her belly but she didn't care. She rushed back the way she came to get to the dog park. Once she reached her house she stopped to take a quick rest break. Suddenly a wave of realization rushed over her.

"What am I doing!? I'm supposed to be a good mannered house pet! Not a wild dog!" She suddenly felt saddened and confused.

If she continued with her plan, she'd be proving herself a wild dog. But if she didn't, she'd keep many dogs enslaved and scared. Sun decided. She'd continue with her plan.

With a sudden burst of speed and determination, Sun sprinted into the forest. Even though she was close to the wolf base, she kept going. The scent of main base faded away. Sun stopped at a big cluster of hills and few trees. She sniffed around a bit, and let out a long howl. Seconds later, Moon emerged from behind a hill.

"Sun! You shouldn't be out here it's dangerous. And I thought you weren't with the wolves today?"

"I'm not. I was at the dog park earlier. A stray Husky took over the park and dogs. The dogs want him gone. But no one will kick him out. Can you?" She hoped her sad puppy eyes were working.

"Of course. Anything for you." He smiled and brushed his tail against hers. Sun shivered and took a step away.

"I'll lead the way."

They hurried back to her house. There they laid down for a few minutes. Sun barely stayed awake. All this running was very tiring. But she knew they had to make the dog park free again. Sun barked to Moon, and they started running again. When they reached the dog park, Moon already knew what to do.

"Sun, climb on my back and jump over. I can jump over myself."

Sun did as she was told. This time there was no spikes on the top. Moon backed up a foot and propelled forward. Clearing the 6 foot fence.

"Wow, that was amazing!" Sun yipped.

"No time to talk. I smell that Husky. So, what should I do?"

"Chase him out if you can. But if not, fight to the death!"

"Wow Sun. That's not like you to want to kill." He happily barked then ran to the tree at the other side of the hill. Sun followed intently.

Many dogs gasped when Moon pounded down the hill growling and snarling. Lightning ran to Sun's side. Quince followed Lightning.

Shred evily smiled when he saw Moon approaching. "A fellow Husky hm? Bow to me like the rest of the dogs."

"I will not bow to you! And I'm not a husky. I'm a wolf!"

"Traitor! You better be ready to die."

"Give me your worst Vulture scum!"

Shred leaped off of the branch and charged at Moon. Moon doged the blow. When Shred was about to turn around, Moon launched himself onto Shred's back. The stray yelped in pain, more than fear. He ran in tight circles, desperate to throw the wolf off his back. Moon's claws couldn't hold onto Shred's back any longer. He barked and growled when he hit the ground. Shred took this to his advantage. He bounded forward and latched his jaw onto Moon's shoulder. His teeth cut though skin. Moon was muscular and he shook Shred off. A small wound was left on his shoulder. Little blood spilled from if. Shred didn't have any more than scratches as Moon was trying to scare him, not hurt or kill him.

"You stupid wolf! I used to be a sled dog. I've got more muscles, strength, and sharp teeth than you!"

"But you were born a pet. I've been a wild wolf my whole life!" Moon yelled and boasted.

They fought viciously for a few more minutes. Shred was tiring fast. He thought Moon was to but was faking it.

"If he is tired he sure isn't showing it." Shred thought.

Moon smirked at the Husky. "Tired yet?"

Shred gasped to himself. He knew Moon wasn't tired at all. That scared Shred and sent him running. Shred sprinted to the gate, and burst out in front of another dog and human who were leaving. Dogs were cheering everywhere. They hollered thanks at Sun for getting a wolf. Some asked Sun where she found him. She would reply, "he's a friend."

Dogs yapped happily and congratulated Moon. Then they ran off, free to be free. Lightning licked Sun playfully and ran to the bench. Moon walked over to Sun.

"We makes pretty good team huh?" He nuzzled Sun's head. She quietly growled and backed away.

"What's wrong?" Moon looked confused then smiled. "Tired I guess?"

Sun didn't like him touching her. "Yea." She replied icily. Moon

shrugged and sat on the base of the hill looking around. He wasn't used to a dog park.

"Great job getting the wolf." Quince happily barked. Moon turned his head to Quince and Sun. "Good job! You totally beat that Husky!"

"Thanks." Moon said. But it came out more like a question.

The Boxer scooted over closer to Sun. His tail met hers. The Boxer smiled at Sun. She smiled back. Little did they know, was that Moon was watching them. He barked with anger. He walked to Quince, growled, ran to the fence, and lept over it.

"What's his problem?" Quince asked.

"Tired? Seems everyone is." Sun happily replied.

Quince got up and stared at the gate. "Better go. The other strays are probably getting all the good food from dumpsters."

"Wait, your... A stray?"

"Yea. I was the runt of the litter. When I was the last puppy, I stayed with my mom. Then they moved and I was given to a mean owner. He left me when he went on a vacation. I smashed through the glass door and ran away. Found some other strays in the town. Lived there. But I come into the country every so often."

Sun noticed he wasn't wearing a collar. She stared at the dark brindle colored boxer for a little. She was shocked. But also a teensy tiny bit happy.

"Why don't you live with me?"

"Sun I could never...." Sun put her fluffy tail over his mouth.

"Nonsense! My human, Melina, loves dogs! She wouldn't mind at all! And best of all, I will share all my food, toys, and kibble!" Sun pranced around and playfully bowed.

Quince laughed to himself. She was young and naive. "Fine. I guess

it's better than dumpster diving."

Sun laughed and trotted to Melina. She was already close by. Coming to take Sun home.

"Come on Sun!" Melina patted her thighs. Sun ran to her. Quince slowly followed. "Who's that Sun?" She petted Quince . He flinched a little. "Hm? Looks homeless. The poor boy doesn't have a collar." Melina sighed sadly. "Come on Sun. Let's go."

Sun yelped and pushed Quince forward. "Sun! Stop! Wait a minute, he is a stray isn't he!" Finally, Sun thought, a human who gets the clue. "Say no more! He's coming with us!" Quince followed. His tongue flopped out of his mouth.

Chapter 11

Quince trotted along side Sun. Secretly, he was still unsure about living in a human house. Sun pranced into the front door when they reached the house. Melina unclipped her leash. Quince was a bit scared. His last master kicked him in the door.

"Come on! I don't bite." Melina laughed. Quince slowly walked inside. He walked behind a rocking chair in the living room.

Melina walked out from the hallway with a big black pillow.

"Here boy. Until we get you a real bed you can lay on this." She reached into a big cupboard where Sun's stuff was. "Here's a rawhide bone. Do you want a meat treat?"

Melina took a dog sausage out of the fridge. She cut a slice from it with a sharp knife. After cutting the slice off, the slice was cut in half. Sun yapped and rolled onto her back. Melina threw the slab into the air, and Sun jumped up and grabbed it in her jaw.

Quince sat down. He remembered that his mother had told him that's what you do when humans have treats or food. Melina threw his slab into the air like she did with Sun's. He let it drop to he floor, before cautiously gobbling it up.

"Don't be scared Quince. Melina won't hurt you at all. Just do what I do. But more manly." She yipped and hopped around.

"Ok. And I'm not scared. Just... Unsure." He laid back down on his pillow and watched the tv.

Quince dozed off and was asleep in a matter of minutes. When he woke up, Sun was slightly nosing his side.

"Come on. It's getting dark and Melina is taking us to the pet store."

"Okkkk." Quince yawned.

Sun hopped in the backseat of the car. Quince remembered what Sun said earlier. To so what she did. So he jumped in to. Melina put the keys in her blue Rav 4. They drove down the road at 30 mph. Sun howled along to the music Melina was playing. Quince joined in. Soon they were singing and howling. The song ended and the dogs stopped howling. Melina pressed her index finger on a button and the news turned on.

"I'm so excited to get to the store! I've made friends with a grey tabby cat named Fuzz there. A worker owns him." Sun barked to Quince.

"Your friends with a cat?"

"Your not?" She shot back.

"Sorry but most Boxers aren't friends with cats."

When they arrived at the store, Melina used Sun's black sparkly leash and collar on Quince. Sun had on her pink sparkly collar and leash. Sun ran to the counter and started talking to Fuzz while Melina talked to the clerk.

"Who's this Sun?" Fuzz meowed.

"A stray Boxer from the park. Melina adopted him!"

"The names Quince. Your Fuzz right?" Quince said.

"Yup. Sorry to run but I've gotta go. My owner is leaving." Fuzz's owner scooped him up in her arms and carried him to her car.

Melina walked down the middle of the store. She ignored the isles of cat treats, toys, food and accessories. They passed the small animal isle. Quince looked around excitedly. He'd never been at a pet store. Sun looked at the huge bin with different bird foods. They kept walking forward until they came to the aisle of dog supplies.

Quince stared in awe at the 3 aisles of dog supplies. 2 bins had girl colored bowls. 2 other bins had boy colored bowls. Melina picked up two dark blue ones. Then they came to the leashes and collars. 6 coat racks had leashes hanging from them with collars at the end.

Melina picked up a dark green set, a dark blue set, and a maroon set. She also picked up a heart pattern with pink set for Sun. Melina grabbed 3 different colored beds as the leash collar sets she got for Quince. Finally she grabbed a pink and red heart patterned one for Sun. Sun licked it happily before pulling ahead to look at outfits.

Sun rarely wore outfits. But she did wear rain coats and hats and boots. Melina looked at the clear packages of 4 dog boots. She picked up 4 packages of large sized dog boots in the colors that the leash and collar sets were in. She picked up a large sun hat with the same pattern and colors as Sun's leash and collar set were in. Melina eyes scanned the coats hanging from coat racks. She picked up 4 large ones in the same colors as the sets.

Quince sniffed the air. It smelled of floor wax, and dog treats. Quince pulled Melina and Sun to the wooden barrels lined up against a white wall. He licked the long bones excitedly.

"Lick the ones you want guys!"

Sun and Quince licked each one. Melina placed them into a big brown basket. Then she pulled them to big bins full of small dog bones. Using a scoop provided she scooped two of each bones into clear plastic bags. After she was done with that, Melina grabbed 2 bags of Blue food. A clerk walked up to them.

"Finding everything ok?" He asked.

"Yes, mister...." Melina scanned his shirt for a name tag. "Mr. Jimmy. Can you take these to the register for me?" She dumped the dog food bags in his arms. Jimmy struggled to hold the weight.

"You thinking what I'm thinking?" Quince asked Sun. She nodded.

Quince put his front paws on Jimmy's chest. He fell backwards and the bags came with him.

"Be careful with those! Their for my dogs!" Melina scolded the clerk.

"Really!?" Jimmy said sarcastically.

Melina shrugged and turned on her Nike tennis shoe covered heel.

When her back was turned, Jimmy stuck his tounge out at her. He managed to get back to his feet and heave the heavy bags into his arms and walk them to the counter.

Melina took a look at the wet or canned dog food selection. Most of the single cans had been picked up. She sighed and turned to the boxes of 28. She picked up 2 boxes of Cesar Sunrise egg and sausage flavored wet food. She liked to buy in bulk and not have to shop for it every week. Then she picked up 2 boxes of Cesar Grilled Chicken. And 2 boxes of Cesar Steak flavored. She figured the Boxer would love them. Melina still didn't have a name for him. She picked up 4 boxes of Cesar Filet flavored wet food. It was Sun's favorite. Usually she'd get more but they didn't have much for options this time.

"Let's go guys! We've got to get some other things before we get you a name tag, ummm... Boy, dog, Boxer."

Sun looked at Quince. "Wonder what she'll name you?"

"Hopefully not Quince! It's what my first owners named me. I don't think it fits a tough Boxer."

Sun shrugged and walked alongside Melina, slightly whining. She hated shopping. Surprising right? It took to long. Sun liked what you got shopping not actually shopping. Quince was to transfixed on the place to notice how long it was taking or how boring it was.

Melina walked towards the front of the store. She walked into the dog grooming supplies room. One shelf had 16 oz bottles of dog fur gloss. Melina picked up two and put them in her other basket. Then she grabbed a drummel nail tool. And two 16 oz bottles of dog shampoo and dog conditioner. Finally, Melina grabbed two 16 oz bottles of sunscreen for dogs.

"Come on guys. Last thing."

They walked back to the dog aisles. Sun and Quince's nails clicked against the linoleum tile floor. Quince barked in excitement when they saw the aisle just for dog toys. He jumped in the air and tried to pull out the toys.

"Pick out which ones you like." Melina said. Then she took out her phone.

Sun and Quince did the same as the treats and bones. They picked one of each for each of them. Melina laughed. "Expensive dogs." She kidded. She had no limit of spending.

Melina had to run to get a cart. The baskets were so full! She tugged the carts towards the checkout. Jimmy was there waiting.

"Ready yet?" Jimmy sneered.

"Yes."

Quince happily panted. Melina was loading the things she had earlier grabbed. She placed them onto a moving black table. Then Jimmy took a razor shaped thing that shot out a red light.

Jimmy huffed. "That'll be $343.67."

Melina took out her debit card marked, pet store. She swiped it and punched in some numbers. Jimmy put her purchases into plastic bags. Melina grabbed them by their plastic handles and plopped them into the cart. Some made loud clanks. Quince skittered back at the loud noise.

"Come on." Melina yawned. "One last stop before we can head home."

They walked up to a big machine with a screen and a keypad. Melina glanced at the brindle boxer before putting her finger on the screen.

"What's she doing?" Quince asked Sun.

"She chooses a shape of the tag for your collar. Then she types a name for it with the buttons. Finally, Melina will swipe her money card and the tag will pop out."

Melina had to think of a name for a little. Then she typed the name with the keypad. As Sun said, she swiped her debit card. Quince quietly yelped when the machine made a loud rattling noise. Soon a

silver tag popped out of the hole at the bottom. Melina smiled and shuffled around a plastic bag. Her fingers swept over the dark blue collar. Her palms plucked it out of the bag, like a claw machine arcade game. Quince sat down and patiently waited for her to clip it on his muscular neck. Then she looped the tag on a silver ring in the front of the collar.

"Your new name is Trooper." Melina exclaimed.

Trooper strutted out of the store with much pride. He had a family, a name, and a collar. That's all he ever wanted.

Chapter 12

Melina quietly closed the garage door. It was Monday and she had to leave for work. Sun woke Trooper up.

"Trooper, I forgot to tell you. Every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, I'm gone from 8 to 2:30 living with a wolf pack. Today's Monday. I'll tell you the details later."

"Sure thing. I probably wouldn't be that fun today. I'm tired from last night."

"So am I. But a healer dog's work is never done." Sun sighed longingly. She had to go to the pack. But she wanted to stay back with Trooper. But then she also wanted to see Moon.

Sun walked to the glass door leading to the porch. She feebly pawed at it, as she normally would. It usually opened. She kept trying, but no matter what it wouldn't open. Sun whined loudly.

"The door won't open! It must be jammed."

Trooper walked over and inspected the door and the door handle. "It's locked." He blankly replied.

"What!? It can't be! The wolves will be so angry!" Sun agonized.

Trooper shrugged and jogged to his food bowl to eat the rest of his Cesar Sunchine Scrambled Eggs & Sausage Falvored Canned Wet Food. It was delicious! Way better than dumpster scraps from being a stray.

Sun was so nervous, she started running in tight circles. Minutes later, Ivy showed up at the door. Trooper stayed behind the counter.

"Sun! Let's go." Ivy said. She was staring at Sun with confusion.

"I can't! The door is locked! There is no way out!"

"You have to go. Alpha has requested your presence."

"I'm sorry!"

Trooper came out from behind the counter. "Wait! I think I know how to open these."

He used his nose and paws to attempt to push the small latch down. It didn't work. This time he used only his nose. It came down half way but you couldn't open it still. He made one last attempt with his teeth. There was small gash marks in it. The latch slid down all the way down the patch of metal where the handle was connected. It made a small click noise. Trooper nosed open the door.

"Thanks Trooper!" Sun yapped.

"Trooper? He wasn't here the last time I got you."

"He was a stray from the dog park. My human adopted him." Sun's idea spark went off in her brain. "Can he come with?! He's really tough and fast and strong! He'd make a great hunter and fighter and sneaker and puller! He's already demonstrated all these skills!"

Trooper knew she was lying a tad but he didn't mind. As long as he would be by Sun most of the time. And he had always wanted to be a wolf.

"I don't see why not!" Ivy barked. "Let's go! Then I'll ask Alpha about it."

Sun heavily panted. She was 30 feet behind them. Trooper was fast and was running beside Ivy. He even was ahead of her sometimes! Sun felt a little jealous. He wasn't even accepted and was already as fast as a wolf! When they reached the base. Trooper had to wait outside of the base while Ivy talked to Alpha Cherokee. Sun strutted in, showing off her acceptance. Many wolves greeted her. Feather barked and they ran towards the healing den for training.

Ivy ran to Trooper. "Alpha said you will be trained as a hunter. So you will be trained by Stone."

Trooper nodded and followed Ivy to Stone's den. She barked down

the tunnel. Stone emerged followed by his new puppies, Pebble and Stem. Their eyes just opened and they were very adventurous.

"Daddy! Can we play with the doggie!?"

"Kids, go back to your mother." They did as they were told. Something not many pups did. Stone turned to Trooper and Ivy. "Sorry about my kids. Their eyes just opened and their a wiggly crawling handful!" He laughed.

Ivy coughed then smiled. "Stone, since your a great hunter, you will be training Trooper. He might be staying with us like Sun."

"Cool." Stone blankly said. He pawed Ivy aside and then spoke to her in private.

"What is it Stone?"

"I'm not sure Alpha will like all these dogs joining."

"Yes I know. Sun wanted her small mixed friend to join as well."

"He's going to throw them all out." Stone sighed and shook his head.

"Trooper won't stay long. And Sun's friend won't be joining." Ivy stated. Stone nodded.

"I'm all set to train you Trooper! Let's go hunt! I'll show you the basics."

Trooper shyly trotted alongside Stone. The truth was, he didn't want to join. But he didn't want to be alone and he thought Sun would be with him at all times. Trooper didn't like Sun as a mate. Just a sister or really good friend. That's all he ever wanted.

Stone noticed Trooper seemed to be distracted. "You alright?"

Trooper shook his head. "Just thinking. So when do we begin?"

"Now I guess." They walked to a deep part of the Soaring Forest territory. Stone put his belly down to the ground. Trooper did the same.

"I smell a rabbit." Trooper licked his lips. Cesar wet food was ok but he longed for real meat.

"Good job. You passed your first test. Smelling the prey and knowing how to hide."

"Great. So what now?"

"To catch a rabbit you have to be fast. I want you to run out there and chase it. You see that berry bush over there?"

Trooper looked at the berry bush by the cluster of trees. "Yea." He nodded.

"We'll chase the rabbit so that it runs past the bush. Then leave chase for a little and take a right around the bush. Then come out and snap at it and catch it. Easy enough?"

"I... I guess so." Trooper nodded.

Stone nodded his head. Trooper dashed out of the tall grass they were hiding behind. The wind blew their way, so the rabbit couldn't smell them, but they could smell the rabbit. Trooper howled and snapped at the rabbit's tail. The brown hare dashed forward at a fast pace. The berry bush was fast approaching. Stone watched intently. Impressed with the pet's ability.

Trooper followed Stone's instruction and took a right to loop around the bush. As expected, the rabbit was still going in a strait line. Trooper jumped in front of it and closed his jaw on the neck of the hare. The bad tasting blood came flowing into his mouth. He coughed and threw the rabbit into the air in shock. The rabbit came down with a, THUD. The hare skipped back up to its feet and ran far away, with nothing but a scratch that would heal easily.

Trooper walked back with his head held low. "I'm sorry. I'm not used to the blood."

Stone sighed to himself out of earshot of Trooper. "It's ok. We already have enough food." Stone replied with undetected irritation in his voice.

They ran back to the base. And Trooper thought of ways to get out of here and not come back.

Chapter 13

2:00 came fast. Ivy led the way out of the forest and back to the farm. Trooper ran beside her, still a little ashamed for not killing that rabbit. Sun was doing as she normally did, panting many feet behind them. They finally reached the house.

"Sun and Trooper, you will have the rest of the 5 suns off. Alpha needs time to think."

Trooper fretted. "Think about what!?"

"To keep dogs in the pack."

"But if we have the rest of the week off, we'll miss the rendezvous!"

"You may come back on the last of the 5 suns."

"Friday."

"Whatever. I'll come get you." Then Ivy darted away.

Trooper nosed the door open. They walked in and settled on their beds in the living room. Trooper was still adjusting to pet life.

"Melina needs to get a doggy door." Sun yawned. She pawed at the remote and the tv turned it on.

"Where'd you learn to do that?"

"I just watch Melina push buttons."

Trooper stared at the tv, deep in thought. Sun noticed.

"Is there something you'd like to talk about?"

"It's so weird, er um, not weird, just strange..."

"Weird and strange are like, the same? But anyways, go on."

"That.. We just met, and then right away we became family. And to be honest, I never wanted to join the wolves."

Sun nodded. "To be honest, I think they're going to kick us all out."

Trooper sighed and put his head down on his paws. They fell asleep. When they woke up, Melina was dropping her purse and a Starbucks cup on the counter.

"Wake up guys. My brother, James, says he has a surprise down at the barn. Let's go!"

She patted the dogs when they jumped on her. She walked to the back door. The glass and handle of the sliding door was cold. It sent shivers up Sun's nose when she touched it. She shared a knowing glance with Trooper. Melina easily yanked it open.

"That's peculiar. I thought it was locked. Hm. No harm done."

Melina jogged on the green grass. The dogs were beside her, their tongues lolled out of their mouths. When they reached the barn, they stopped to take a break in the shade.

The barn was a classic color of red and white paint, with a black roof. A golden weather vane was on top. It was shaped as a chicken. The barn was many years old. It showed signs of aging. Some beams were cracked. Splinters of wood stuck out everywhere. Taunting you with their painful end spikes. Tricking you to touch it. The paint peeled on the door. And it squeaked like a mouse when the wind would move it.

Melina used her hand to dust off some dirt from a folding chair outside the barn. She laid her head back and closed her eyes. The air smelt heavily of pollen. Melina's allergies got the best of her and she sneezed. Sneezing must've been contagious, because after her, Sun and Trooper sneezed to. Melina laughed and petted their heads.

It was a nice day out. Above 75 degrees Fahrenheit. A nice day for a June in Montana. Sun looked over and a black pick up truck was pulling up. Large coils of barbed wire bounced around in the bed of the truck. James, Melina's brother, was in the drivers seat,

navigating over the bumpy gravel driveway. He parked the truck next to the smaller door on the side of the barn. He tugged the door open and waved. His gloved hand waved back and forth as if it were a flag, flapping in the breeze with pride.

"Hey bro!" Melina walked to him and pulled him into a hug.

"Don't hold to tight now. I'm full of dirt. And your fancy Under Armour work out suit will get dirty." His country accent was thick. He laughed and patted the dogs when they jumped on him.

James grabbed the biggest barbed wire coil and heaved it into the barn. He placed it next to the wall with tools on it.

"Making a new pasture for the sheep. Wolves tryin' to get at em'. With the other coils I'm making a new pasture."

"So what's your surprise?"

"Well, I know ya'll been excited about it. It's more of a 3 part surprise. First part, you won't really care for. I'm getting some new cows tonight and your coming with me to the auction." He scanned her expensive outfit. A grimace spread on his tan face. "And you might want to wear some jeans, cowgirl boots, and a button up long sleeve shirt with a tank-top. Wear a cowgirl hat and put your hair in a braid."

"I can't shop for that tonight!"

"You don't have to. You already have it. You dragged me into cleaning your closet with you so I'm dragging you to a cow auction."

She frowned playfully and shoved him.

"Second, in 2 days, were all going to the dog agility show in Missoula. The dogs can come to."

Sun yapped. She'd never been there before! Trooper trotted in a circle, excited as well.

"The third part's really exciting. I've been thinking, I've got so many

sheep and now getting some cows. Your dogs are useless to help me herd." Sun and Trooper growled. James just shrugged. "So.... I've got myself a dog!"

Melina gasped. James whistled. A shrill excited bark came from in a stall. A female Border Collie came out. She licked James and Melina and rolled on her back. Then she sat and put her paw up. Melina shook it. Then she and Sun and Trooper did their sniffing ritual.

"What's her name?"

"Shannon. Got her from a fellow farmer selling them at his farm. Their already 3 years old. He had to many and was selling them for $600. Trained and everything. She has already herded the sheep."

They patted her some more before James and Shannon walked to his small cabin like house behind the barn. His house only had one bedroom, a kitchen, a living room, a small bathroom, and a small closet like room for the washer and dryer. Shannon trotted to her food dish and had some bites of food and laps of water while waiting for James to come get her.

Melina walked inside and put Trooper and Sun in the spare bedroom. She locked the door and went to her spacious bedroom to change into 'country clothes'. Once ready, she hollered bye to the dogs, who were already sleeping. Then she locked the back door, and garage door before she walked to the truck. Shannon jumped into the truck bed. Melina climbed into the passenger side. James was waiting for her. He stepped into the drivers seat and stuck the muddy key in the ignition. Melina turned on the radio and they listened to the country songs playing. The windows were rolled down and the summer breeze was flowing into the car.

Chapter 14

Shannon barked at all the farm animals she saw. The smaller animals scattered away. The cows looked at her like she was manure. Secretly, Shannon was a little unsure about herding cows. Big bulls scared her. With their giant horns and big bodies. She didn't want to be crushed.

Shannon was from a litter of 8. They lived on a farm close to James' farm. Her owners sold the whole litter because they got to old to deal with 8 border collies. Most her litter mates were sold before her. Her older sister by 2 minutes, was sold to a woman to be an agility dog. She was the only puppy to be trained for agility. The rest of the puppies were trained to herd. Her sister was sold just a few hours before James picked her up.

The smell of rust and blood surrounded her. She saw blood stains from hunted animals in the bed of the truck. She saw some rusty wire in the corner. Shannon wondered if she would hunt.

She stared into the countryside. She could smell the cows. They pulled into a makeshift parking lot. It was a corner of the field that wasn't used. James and Melina jumped out of the truck. Shannon leaped out and followed them. They strolled into the red and white tent. Behind the tent was many trailers full of cows. When they walked in, Shannon noticed their weren't many people there. Only 5 other dogs lazily panted in the heat. Shannon saw a big pen in the middle of the tent. They walked up to an old cowboy. He had 3 paddles left in his hands.

"Howdy folks! Better hurry on up to the seats. The auction starts soon!"

The cowboy handed James a yellow paddle. It had an A7568T9 on it. They walked to an empty spot on the metal bleachers. Shannon joined the other dogs in panting. The old cowboy walked to the middle, holding a microphone.

"Howdy y'all! Our auction will be starting real quick. We have a total of 42 cattle up for bid. They are all beef cattle. Raise your paddle to bid. Come find me at the back at the end to pay and claim your cows. Another cowboy can deliver the cows to your farm tonight. Now let's get started!"

He walked out of the pen. A bull came forward. He was very muscular. Probably a leader of his cows. James leaned forward in his seat. The announcer tapped the microphone.

"Let's start the bidding for this fine bull at $700!"

James raised his paddle. The announcer called $800. He was raising the bid by hundreds. Many other people were bidding. Soon the price got up to $1,500. James raised his paddle. Everyone grunted and sat back.

"And the winner is that young fell'r with the yellow paddle and Border Collie!"

The auction continued for another 2 hours. Shannon remained intent and focused on the cattle.

"And that's the end of this auction! Buyers, come pay for your cattle."

James walked to the table by the back. The announcer was sitting there. James handed him his money, exactly $3,400. The other people in line were sweating and yawning. A male Border Collie nosed her side.

"Hey sis."

"Trent! Hey! Long time no see!"

"It's been a day. So how are you?"

"Good. I live on a big farm with a nice owner named James. His sister lives there to. She has two dogs."

"Nice. I'm going to herd cattle. I have an owner named Bill. And I don't live to far from you. About 3 acres away. I've smelt your sent

while I was exploring."

James whistled for Shannon. They were outside the tent in the truck. "See you later Trent!"

"Bye Shan."

He licked Bill's hand. Trent was often impatient and got bored easily. Bill ruffled his head fur. Shannon jogged to the truck and hopped in the bed of it. She fell asleep, even with the truck bouncing. She only rested for a little. A truck and trailer followed them. It had cows in it. They were mooing loudly and kicking the trailer in fear.

When they got back to the farm, the cows were unloaded in a huge pen. The gates were rusty and old. James shook hands with the man and the man left. The cows mooed and tromped around the pen. James got a bucket of grain and put it in a trough. The cows stomped over and ate it. Shannon soared over the gates and nipped at the cow's ankles. They got freaked out and ran towards the other side of the pen.

"Shannon! Come on. We're not herding yet!" James laughed.

Shannon ran back and dug under the gate. Then she ran to his house and pawed at the front door. James hugged Melina and ran to his house. He opened the door and Shannon ran in. She circled around a few times and laid down on the couch for a good night's sleep.